



# HERB NEWS

## Herbalgram<sup>TM</sup>

MARK BLUMENTHAL, Editor  
ROB McCaleb, Associate Editor

SUMMER 1983

### HERB TRADE ASSOCIATION DEFUNCT

The Herb Trade Association (HTA) held its last meeting of the Board of Directors in August 1981 in San Diego. Since that time, there has been little attempt to keep the organization alive and operative by members of the Board. Members of the Herb Trade and Natural Food Industry have known for about a year that HTA had closed its doors.

### HERB NEWS IN HIBERNATION AFTER HTA CLOSING

With the closing of the HTA, the HERB NEWS Magazine, formerly the official publication of the HTA, also went into a protracted period of inactivity. This was largely due to lack of funds and sufficient personnel to deal with the task of writing, editing and printing a magazine. Our heartfelt apologies to all of those herbal enthusiasts who have written us requesting HERB NEWS subscriptions and information. Republication of HERB NEWS is being considered, possibly under the aegis of some of the new herb organizations. In the meantime, however, we will be putting out the "Herbalgram" in this format, which is much easier, faster, and cheaper to produce. Everyone who has sent us HERB NEWS subscription money or was previously a member of the HTA will receive a copy of "Herbalgram."

### AMERICAN HERBAL PRODUCTS ASSOCIATION

In the wake of the HTA's closing, several of the larger herb companies have met to form the American Herbal Products Association (AHPA), which is designed to continue some of the work of the HTA in the area of herb business and industry matters. The President of the new organization is Peter Landes of KHL Flavors in New York. Vice-president is Loren D. Israelson, General Counsel of Nature's Way Products of Provo, Utah. Jim Adelson, of Aphrodisia, Inc. of Brooklyn, is Treasurer, and the Secretary is Chuck Stevens of Whole Herb Co. of Mill Valley, California.

AHPA has held three meetings in the past year. During the latest meeting, held in Anaheim, California, during the Natural Foods Expo 83, the Board of AHPA voted to support a resolution offering the organization's support of the position taken by the FMALI Herb Co., of Santa Cruz, California, in the current legal dispute with the FDA over food safety law interpretation. Any company or individual who wishes to seek more information regarding the specifics of the suit should contact Ben Zaricor of FMALI Herb Co., 831 Almar, Santa Cruz, CA 95060.

The Board of Directors of AHPA also voted to help underwrite the costs of producing and mailing this edition of Herbalgram as a service to the herb industry and movement in general. For further information about AHPA, contact Peter Landes, AHPA President, c/o KHL Flavors, 37-02 48th St., Long Island City, NY 11104 (212) 729-3686.

The Second Annual General Meeting of AHPA will be held Saturday, July 23 at 10:00 a.m. in the Silver Room of the Denver Hilton. Tea and coffee will be served at 9:15. For more information, contact Peter Landes (212) 729-3686.



## DR. JOHN R. CHRISTOPHER DIES AT 73

Thousands of people in the herb and natural food industry, as well as many more thousands of people in the general public, were saddened by the news of the death of Dr. John R. Christopher, noted herbal practitioner, author and lecturer, who died at his home in Utah on February 6. Dr. Christopher wrote his first book, JUST WHAT IS THE WORD OF WISDOM, in 1939. Since then, he wrote several other books, including his major work, the 600-plus page SCHOOL OF NATURAL HEALING. Dr. Christopher traveled extensively to hundreds of towns each year in an almost-missionary style of promoting the benefits of a good diet and herbs. Many of his herbal formulas provide the basis for numerous herb products found in natural food stores and drug stores throughout America today. His workshops and lectures were an inspiration to many people who came to know of the beauty of herbs through contact with Dr. Christopher. He is survived by his wife and six children.

## HERB BLURBS

Some new medicinal plant uses were reported at a natural product chemistry symposium at the recent meeting of the American Chemical Society in Seattle. USDA researchers have isolated a substance called "sesbanimide" from the poisonous rattlebrush (Sesbania drummondii) seed, which grows in seven southern and southeastern states. The compound has shown promise in laboratory tests against leukemia and carcinoma in research conducted by the National Cancer Institute.

University of California-Berkeley scientists are studying a compound called maesanin, derived from the orange berries of the African medicinal shrub Maesa lanceolata, which is used by African medicine men to help prevent cholera. In studying the antibacterial properties of the chemical, the researchers found the chemistry to be similar to Vitamin K. "It is possible the chemical may prove to be a model for new antibiotics," suggests Isao Kubo, the researcher who brought the plant back from Africa. (SCIENCE 83, April 9, 83)

## FLURRY OF INTEREST IN FEVERFEW

After a small article appeared in the January 1983 issue of the LAWRENCE REVIEW OF NATURAL PRODUCTS on the herb Feverfew (Chrysanthemum parthenium), several herb companies report inquiries from major pharmaceutical companies trying to acquire laboratory samples of the herb. According to the article, Feverfew has traditionally been used in Europe as an antipyretic, lowering body temperature in fevers. The research in the article points to the supposition that the herb acts in a way that is chemically different from aspirin.

## TABASCO TOXICITY?

If you've ever wondered if eating too much of those jalapeño peppers or hot sauces may cause any harm, well, now there's clinical research to show just how much can be eaten without worry. According to THE LAWRENCE REVIEW OF NATURAL PRODUCTS, capsaicin, the active principle in the various hot peppers (Capsicum spp.) does have a lethal dosage when fed to rats in massive quantities. For a person to experience this level, an adult would have to consume 23 two-ounce bottles of the type of sauce that is commonly found in Louisiana. No problem, though, since a person is most likely to vomit after consuming very much smaller doses. (LRNP, Feb 83)

## GARLIC ODOR REPELS DEER

University of Washington scientists have found that dimethyl selenide, a volatile gas converted from selenium after ingestion of large amounts of garlic (which contains large quantities of selenium, a trace mineral), has the property of repelling deer. In an attempt to help protect young Douglas Fir seedlings in forests, the researchers have developed a tablet which is planted in the ground when the seedlings are planted. Dissolved by



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rainfall and absorbed by the seedling roots, the tablet results in the young trees eliminating dimethyl selenide through the leaves, thereby repelling the deer and avoiding the costly damage, estimated to be in the millions each year, to Douglas Firs in Washington and Oregon. The tablets are said to last three years; long enough for the trees to reach a height tall enough to inure them from the reach of the browsing deer. (SCIENCE 83, April 9, 83)

## PURE MISCELLANIA: EUCALYPTUS REPELS FLEAS, STONES KOALAS

According to a front page article in the WALL STREET JOURNAL, May 20, 1983, an Australian airline spokesman denied charges that Koala bears are flea-ridden, by citing the fact that they exist solely on Eucalyptus leaves, the oil of which wards off fleas. He further suggested that the oil may account for the animals' "calm, sluggish nature," as some research indicates that Eucalyptus oil metabolizes during digestion into a "muscle-relaxing drug that keeps the Koala perpetually stoned." It is not advised that humans attempt such large-scale ingestion of Eucalyptus, as large amounts may be toxic to most animals except the furry marsupials.

## MEDIAWATCH...HERBS IN THE NEWS

Some very interesting articles giving herbs very favorable publicity have appeared recently in the national press. Most notable was a front-page article on Wild Ginseng in the WALL STREET JOURNAL on Thursday, March 3. The article described the origins of the Wild Ginseng trade in the U.S. and its relation to the fur and hide trade in backwoods Appalachia. In a related matter, NATION'S BUSINESS (Mar 83) wrote an article about Bob Corr, herbal entrepreneur, whose soft drink, GINSENG RUSH, has really made it big in the natural food market and is now becoming available in the supermarket trade. ... A tip of the hat goes to Mo Seigel's CELESTIAL SEASONINGS, whose beautifully-painted semi truck was pictured as one of the winners in FORTUNE Magazine's recent truck decoration contest (FORTUNE Nov 82). ... The new edition of NATIONAL GEOGRAPHIC (Mar 83) has a beautiful article by Lonelle Aickman (author of NATURE'S HEALING PLANTS) with gorgeous pictures, including some shots of Kent Taylor's herb farm (Taylor's Gardens, Vista, CA), the largest herb nursery in the U.S., as well as a picture of CELESTIAL SEASONINGS' Mo Siegel.

American Wild Ginseng (Panax quinquefolius) has gotten some pretty good press lately, including a front-page article in the WALL STREET JOURNAL (3 Mar 83), titled "Hong Kong Will Get Its Ginseng If Snakes Don't Get The Digger." The article mentions the curious hazards of wildcrafting Wild Ginseng for export to China: some half a million pounds in 1981 at a value of roughly \$30 million. Wild Ginseng also found its way into an article in the widely-circulated PARADE Magazine Sunday supplement on April 17 in the "Significa" column. The article centers on saffron (Crocus sativa) as the world's most expensive spice, often retailing for \$150 an ounce. Wild Ginseng is mentioned parenthetically as the world's most expensive herb: as much as \$23,000 an ounce in Hong Kong! This is an obvious reference to Wild Chinese Ginseng (Panax ginseng), which is so rare as to be virtually extinct.

## FDA OCT PANEL REVIEWS MENSTRUAL AND APHRODISIAC HERBS

As part of its on-going over-the-counter (OTC) review of products sold in the marketplace, to review and update information on these products' safety and efficacy, the FDA has published some proposed monographs for products with the intended use as menstrual aids and those that purport to have aphrodisiac properties. Although none of the herbs found in the products reviewed were ever singled out as being unsafe, the panel was not able to find sufficient information to substantiate their effectiveness for the purposes claimed on the product labels. The herbs reviewed for menstrual purposes all came from one well-known female tonic which has been sold in the marketplace for over one hundred years. They include: Jamaica dogwood (Piscidia erythrina), Pleurisy root (Asclepias tuberosa),



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Black Cohosh (Cimifuga racemosa), Life root (Senecio aureus), and Dandelion root (Taraxacum Officinale). Herbs reviewed as reportedly having possible aphrodisiac properties include Dong Quai (Angelica sinensis), Goldenseal (Hydrastis canadensis), Gotu Kola (Centella asiatica), Ginseng root (Panax ginseng), Licorice root (Glycyrrhiza glabra), Sarsaparilla root (Smilax sarsaparilla), Nux vomica (Strychnos nuxvomica), Pega palo (Rhynchosia pyramidalis), and Yohimbe (Coryanthe yohimbe). The information published by the FDA was an advance notice of a proposed rule-making, and as yet has no validity. Interested parties may contact Dr. William Gilbertson at the FDA to review or contest the findings.

## GINSENG RESEARCH INSTITUTE

The founding meeting of the Ginseng Research Institute was held in Philadelphia on October 1-2, 1982. In attendance were many noted American Ginseng researchers and business leaders. The stated goals of this new organization are to pursue research related to American Ginseng, co-ordinate research among scientists, help provide accurate Ginseng information to scientists, government, the medical profession, commercial interests, and the general public. Anyone interested in further information should contact Arthur Rashap, President, Ginseng Research Institute, Main Street, Roxbury, NY 12474, (607) 326-7888.

## INFORMATION ACCESS

THE LAWRENCE REVIEW OF NATURAL PRODUCTS is a monthly newsletter focusing on the use, abuse and misuse of natural products, many of which are herbal. Written primarily for the public health professional, the publication contains much of the latest technical information on herbs. Available to poison control centers, students, researchers, and anyone in the herb or natural food business who wants authoritative information. \$18 per year from Pharmaceutical Information Associates, Dept. M, P.O. Box 186, Collegeville, PA 19426.

THE AMERICAN HERB ASSOCIATION QUARTERLY NEWSLETTER is published by the organization of the same name. Primarily geared toward herb consumers, the Association was formed to help fill the vacuum created when the HTA "Friend of Herb Consumer" membership was abandoned. The AHA is run by professional herbalists who have extensive experience with herbs on horticultural, wildcrafting, and healing levels. Contact Bob Brucia, AHA Director, P.O. Box 353, Dept. HN, Rescue, CA 95672.

UPDATE ON HERBS is a newsletter published by the Association for the Promotion of Herbal Healing. Edited by Subhuti Dharmananda, PhD, this publication contains interesting articles on various topics in which herbs are related to public health promotion. Book reviews include technical books and Chinese herbals. \$8 per year from APHH, 2000 Center St., Suite 1475, Berkeley, CA 94709. (Dept. HN)

THE BUSINESS OF HERBS, a bimonthly newsletter for those in or starting to enter the herb business, is an eight-page publication containing articles on commercial growing of herbs and various ways to harvest, market, and distribute herbs and herb products. Contains interviews with herb growers and business people. Available are \$15 per year and \$25 for two years. Free sample sent upon request. Portia Meares, P.O. Box 559, Madison, Wisconsin 53702. (Dept. HN)

## SCHOOLS

CALIFORNIA SCHOOL OF HERBAL STUDIES has an extensive catalog of courses being offered this Spring and Summer in the California and Northwest area. Contact Rosemary Gladstar, California School of Herbal Studies, P.O. Box 350, Dept. HN, Guerneville, CA 95446, (707) 869-0972.

PLATONIC ACADEMY OF HERBAL STUDIES has been in operation for 5 years, offering one of the most unique herbal correspondence courses available anywhere. Contact Dr. Paul Lee, Platonic Academy, P.O. Box 409, Dept. HN, Santa Cruz, CA 95061.



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## FARNSWORTH: DISTINGUISHED ECONOMIC BOTANIST

The Society for Economic Botany's 24th annual meeting was held at Miami University in Oxford, OH, June 13-15, 83. The majority of the papers focused on the Ethnobotany of the Neo-Tropics. Most of the papers presented in the symposium will be published in the next issue of Journal of Economic Botany, available from the publication office, NY Botanical Gardens, Bronx, NY 10458.

Dr. Norman Farnsworth accepted the annual Distinguished Economic Botanist Award and spoke of the past and future progress of Pharmacognosy. The 1984 conference will be held the second week in June at Texas A&M, College Station, Texas. The symposium will be "The Ethnobotany of the Southwest." Direct correspondence relating to this to Dr. Hugh Wilson.

## CELESTIAL SEASONINGS BACKS HERB RESEARCH FOUNDATION

The Herb Research Foundation has been incorporated as a non-profit research and educational foundation. HRF will collect and disseminate information, and fund research on common botanicals and herbal products, including herbal teas. The Foundation's research will be conducted by leading plant researchers, pharmacologists and medical doctors. It will provide reliable current information to members through Herb News Magazine and Herbalgrams. CELESTIAL SEASONINGS will match contributions to the Herb Research Foundation, up to \$2,000, to build the membership and research budget.

The Professional Advisory Board of the HRF includes specialists in the fields of Pharmacognosy, Medicine (MDs), Botany, Ethnobotany, Nutrition, Medical Chemistry, Pharmacology and Taxonomy.

The organizational meeting of the HRF membership will be held July 22, 1983, 10:30 a.m. at the Denver Hilton. This meeting is for anyone interested in research on botanicals. HRF will also conduct a public seminar on herbs Monday, July 25 at 7:00 p.m., also at the Hilton. The featured speaker will be Dr. Yeshi Donden, personal physician of the Dalai Lama and a practicing expert on Tibetan herbal medicine. Dr. Donden will also conduct a seminar on 7/23 and a weekend retreat, 7/30-7/31. For more information, write or call Rob McCaleb (303) 449-3779, or fill out the application form below.

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### HERB RESEARCH FOUNDATION

Detach and mail to:

Rob McCaleb, HRF, 1780 55th St., Boulder, CO 80301

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## ROB'S RESEARCH REVIEWS

from Herb News Co-editor Rob McCaleb

Researchers at Purdue University (1) have found a simple, rapid test to screen for plant extracts with anti-tumor activity. The modified potato-disc method tests for tumor inhibition on discs of potato tubers, replacing costly animal testing. Most results agreed well with studies using mice, indicating that the same tumor inhibitors are effective in both plants and animals. Known active and inactive plant extracts were tested to verify the test's effectiveness, and 41 species of the Euphorbiaceae family were tested for anti-tumor activity.

Antiviral activity of Podophyllum peltatum (Mandrake root) is being investigated at the U. of Michigan (2). The aqueous extract was shown to inhibit replication of the measles virus and, to a lesser degree, Herpes simplex (type I). Earlier testing (3) showed activity against Herpes (II), influenza A, and vaccinia viruses. The present study indicates that the major constituent, podophyllotoxin, is mostly responsible. Mandrake root has long been used medicinally, and was known to the American Indians. This plant is toxic even in small quantities.

American Indian medicinal plants are being studied by chemists at the Montana State U. (4). Osmorhiza occidentalis (sweet root or mountain sweet cicely) was smoked, or used as a decoction to treat colds, pneumonia, sore throats, toothaches and stomach aches. Falcariindiol, known to have antifungal properties, was found to be a major constituent of the extract.

Medicinal plants of Indonesia are reviewed in some detail, and comparisons drawn between Indonesian use and tropical American uses of the same plants. Many of the plants have found similar uses by these diverse cultures. (5,6)

Hypoglycemic effects of Opuntia streptocantha (a cactus) have been verified in testing on rabbits, dogs and rats (7). According to the authors, "the results validate the use of this plant (in Mexican traditional medicine) for treatment of Diabetes mellitus symptomology."

Another anti-diabetic plant is being tested in India. Gymnema sylvestre (no English common name) has been used in India to treat diabetes since the 6th century B.C.! It has been found to regulate blood sugar in rabbits, and "appears to correct the metabolic derangements in diabetic rabbit liver, kidney and muscle." (7)

- (1) NR Ferrigni, JE Putnam, et al, JOURNAL OF NATURAL PRODUCTS 45 (6) 679-686.
- (2) E Bedows, GM Hatfield, JOURNAL OF NATURAL PRODUCTS 45 (6) 725-729.
- (3) G May, G Willuhn, DRUG RESEARCH 28 (1) 1978.
- (4) JR Kern, JH Cardellina II, JOURNAL OF NATURAL PRODUCTS 45 (6) 774-776.
- (5) HH Hirschhorn, JOURNAL OF ETHNOPHARMACOLOGY 7 (2) 123-156.
- (6) HH Hirschhorn, JOURNAL OF ETHNOPHARMACOLOGY 7 (2) 156-168.
- (7) KR Shanmugasundram, C Panneerselvam, et al, JOURNAL OF ETHNOPHARMACOLOGY 7 (2) 205-234.

## QUESTIONS ?

We welcome questions from our readers. Those which are asked most often, or which we think are of greatest interest to our readers, will be answered in a new column to begin with the next issue.

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## RECENT BOOKS

Although we have not had time to review all of them at this time or include adequate reviews in this limited space, we thought we'd include a partial listing of some of the more interesting titles to come across our desk in the past year or two:

BIBLIOGRAPHY ON HERBS, HERBAL MEDICINE, NATURAL FOODS and UNCONVENTIONAL TREATMENTS. Andrews, Theodora. Libraries Unltd., Inc., Littleton, CO.

DIVIDED LEGACY. Coulter, Harris. North Atlantic Books. Richmond, CA. (A well-researched history of Homeopathic medicine.)

SPACE, TIME AND MEDICINE. Dossey, Larry, MD. Shambhala. Boulder, CO.

THE TAO OF MEDICINE: GINSENG, ORIENTAL REMEDIES, AND THE PHARMACOLOGY OF HARMONY. Fulder, Stephen. Destiny Books, NY.

PLANET MEDICINE: FROM STONE AGE SHAMANISM TO POST-INDUSTRIAL. Grossinger, Richard. Shambala Publications/Random House, NY.

MEDICAL BOTANY: PLANTS AFFECTING MAN'S HEALTH. Lewis and Elvin-Lewis. Wiley Interscience, NY. (This now-classic textbook is now available in paperback).

VEGETARIAN MEDICINES. Meyer, Clarence. Meyerbooks, Glenwood, IL. (Written by a descendant of Joseph Meyer, turn-of-the-century herbalist who wrote the classic, THE HERBALIST.)

METABOLIC ECOLOGY: A WAY TO WIN THE CANCER WAR. Rohe, Fred. Wedgestone Press. Winfield, KS.

HERBS, SPICES AND FLAVORINGS. Stobart, Tom. The Overlook Press. Woodstock, NY.

MEDICINAL USES OF PLANTS BY INDIAN TRIBES OF NEVADA. Train, Percy et al. Quarterman Publications. Lawrence, MA.

THE HONEST HERBAL. Tyler, V.E. George F. Stickley Co. Phila., PA.



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## MEETINGS:

HERB RESEARCH FOUNDATION organizational meeting: July 22, 10:30 a.m., Denver Hilton.

AMERICAN HERBAL PRODUCTS ASSOCIATION second annual general meeting. Saturday, July 23, 10:00 a.m. in the Silver Room, Denver Hilton.

HERB SEMINAR. Public lecture by Dr. Yeshi Donden, personal physician of the Dalai Lama and expert on Tibetan herbal medicine. Monday, July 25, 7:00 p.m., Denver Hilton.

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## A CLOVE A DAY KEEPS THE DOCTOR AWAY?

Modern nutritionists and medical researchers are still discovering that some of the ancient uses for the time-honored garlic are still very valuable. According to an article in PROFESSIONAL NUTRITIONIST (Fall 82), research has indicated the possible role of garlic in the treatment of such common 20th Century conditions as diabetes, heart disease, and microbial infection.

Chinese research indicates the possible use of garlic in treating a frequently-fatal form of meningitis and even to help successfully with perforated eardrums! The article further cites East European uses of garlic creams for acne and bacterial and fungal infections.

Further, research from India and England cites the use of garlic to lower blood cholesterol and blood sugar levels. Studies at the USDA Human Nutrition Center in Maryland were cited to also have shown garlic's effects of increasing insulin levels, reducing blood fats and sugar. But this research was terminated, as the scientists claimed their rats' blood smelled like garlic. Said one researcher, "It just doesn't seem to me that anyone would be interested in smelling that much of garlic, no matter what we found it could do for them."



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